

**REGULAR MEETING OF
DIRECTORS OF BELMONT FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT**

Tuesday, January 10, 2006

CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS, ONE TWIN PINES LANE

CALL TO ORDER 8:50 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Directors Present: Lieberman, Dickenson, Feierbach, Warden, Mathewson

Directors Absent: None

Staff Present: Interim District Manager Crist, City Attorney Zafferano, Interim Fire Chief Fry, Finance

Director Fil, District Secretary Cook.

CONSENT CALENDAR

Approval of Minutes of Special Meeting of November 22, 2005.

ACTION: On a motion by Director Warden, seconded by Director Feierbach, the Consent Calendar was approved by a show of hands (3-0-2, Dickenson/Lieberman abstain).

ADDITIONAL BUSINESS

Alternative Proposals for Future Fire Services in the City of Belmont, Public Meeting #4 January 10, 2006

Interim District Manager Crist stated that a final decision regarding future fire services would be made at the February 28th meeting. He reviewed the items yet to be addressed prior to that decision. He noted that the San Carlos City Council met recently regarding this matter, and suggested a 2+2 approach to address this issue. He recommended that if those discussions are not fruitful, the Fire Protection District should move forward with a contract with the City of San Mateo for fire services.

Interim District Manager Crist outlined South County Fire Authority's structure, and he reviewed equipment and station locations used for comparison purposes for the analysis of the proposals submitted. He stated that dissolution was based on finances. He reviewed the issues to be address should dissolution occur, and clarified that unfunded liabilities would need to be addressed regardless of service provider. He reviewed the pros and cons of each proposal, and stated that all are feasible with

the exception of Firefighters Local 2400, since it has no legal entity for administration. He noted that the option for Belmont to structure its own fire department is also a feasible but high-cost option.

Interim District Manager Crist reviewed the pros and cons of saving South County Fire Authority as an entity, and he reviewed the issues to be addressed with this option.

He noted that the Maze report outlines funding issues, and clarified that those costs are based on a standard for comparison. Actual costs could be higher, and are negotiable.

Interim District Manager Crist stated that the California Department of Forestry (CDF) option is the least desirable of the options for the following reasons: more duty hours, fewer services provided, truck service not provided, firefighters do not support, overtime and personnel likely to be rotated out of Belmont, and loss of local control. He clarified that the CDF proposal has the lowest cost of all options.

Interim District Manager Crist outlined the reasons that the City of San Mateo offers the best option for Belmont, including quality of proposal, competent department, commitment to provide quality service to Belmont, cost savings potential keeps BFPD solvent for 12 years, long-term costs stable and predictable, proximity to Belmont, ability to provide truck service, smooth transition for SCFA staff.

RECESS: 9:30 P.M.

RECONVENE: 9:40 P.M.

Discussion ensued regarding staffing levels and equipment needs.

In response to Directors' questions, Stuart Gary, Citygate Associates (consultant), responded that his firm did not analyze personnel needs in depth relative to the current structure. He noted that the call volume for Battalion Chiefs should be reviewed. He recommended there be 14 to 15 firefighters per station, and there should be per-station head-count equity. In response to a question regarding the effect of the proposed Bay Meadows development on fire services, he noted that new buildings have

few fires, and medical needs are a function of socio-economics. He stated that the call volume would likely be low in the early years of the development.

In response to President Mathewson, Interim Fire Chief Fry stated that 62 percent of SCFA's calls are medical. Director Warden noted that there is a high level of false alarms.

Regina Susa, Avon Street, stated she supports fire service at a local level, not from a State agency.

Director Feierbach stated she supported looking for an equitable solution to remain with the City of San Carlos, and supports Mayor Grocott's request for a 2+2 committee to consist of councilmembers, city managers finance directors and city attorneys from each city. She also expressed support for the San Mateo option, but does not support the CDF option since fire staff could be moved anywhere in the State.

City Attorney Zafferano clarified that if this committee desires to meet without noticing requirements, it should not be the existing members of SCFA. In either case, it cannot be a closed session.

Director Lieberman stated that he met with SCFA firefighters, and acknowledged their long, loyal service to the District. He supports the best option for the personnel, but financial, political, and service viability are critical. All options have pros and cons. His preferred option is a reconstitution of SCFA if it is financially viable, as long as service is not compromised. He supports discussions with San Carlos. He expressed concern regarding the support of the San Mateo City Council for the San Mateo proposal, since San Mateo was in a partnership with Foster City at one time, but the partnership dissolved. There is a need to explore all options. He expressed concern regarding the long-term feasibility of a self-contained fire department.

Director Dickenson recommended removing CDF, Redwood City, and the Firefighters Local 2400 options from consideration. He supports keeping San Mateo and a self-contained fire department as options, and also supports a continuing dialog with San Carlos regarding SCFA. He is committed to a high level of service.

Director Warden stated that this is a complicated issue over which there have been many hours and many meetings spent. He concurs with the elimination of CDF as a potential service provider, although it could be a fall-back option. He expressed concern regarding the ability for SCFA to continue, but is willing to negotiate in good faith. The two-person committee needs to represent the Council's position. The City of Belmont initiated the dissolution process and will look for sincerity from San Carlos City Council members. He noted there is bad blood between the two cities. He reviewed the many issues to be addressed regarding the Authority. The two cities are not working well together now, which also needs to be addressed. He stated he would support a self-contained fire department, even if it is more expensive, because Belmont voters would be likely to support an assessment.

President Mathewson expressed support for the 2+2 approach, especially if San Carlos supports it as well. He might support a self-contained fire department if feasible. Regarding the other proposals, he commented that Redwood City's administrative overhead issue was not addressed, he appreciated the firefighters work, but management under their proposal is not addressed, and he concurred that CDF could be a fall back option.

Matt Grocott, San Carlos Mayor, stated he appreciates the consensus regarding the desire to revitalize South County Fire, and he also appreciates the major issues to be addressed. He recognizes that Belmont is tired of being denigrated by San Carlos, and that this is a culture that needs to stop. He has discussed this with the current San Carlos City Manager. He apologized on behalf of the City of San Carlos.

Director Warden commented that this comment from Mayor Grocott was a good start towards addressing the issues.

ACTION: A motion was made by Director Feierbach, seconded by Director Lieberman, to appoint Mayor Mathewson and Director Warden as a subcommittee to negotiate with San Carlos in a 2+2 format, to include both cities' attorneys, finance directors, and city managers.

ACTION: Director Warden offered a friendly amendment to appoint Fire Chief Lowden as facilitator. Director Feierbach accepted the amendment. The motion, as amended, was unanimously approved by a show of hands.

ADJOURNMENT at this time, being 10:23 P.M.

Meeting audio-recorded and videotaped
Audio Recording 624

Terri Cook
District Secretary

Minutes approved 2/14/06